

5 Tips for Parents Left Speechless by the Grammys

The Grammy Award show has come and gone. The mixed bag mosaic of musical expressions leaves many parents in a quandary: "What are we supposed to do with our sons and daughters exposed to music, especially the MTV youth-driven market permeating the airways today?"

"Examine all things. Firmly hold onto what is good. Abstain from all appearances of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21-22). The scriptural directive here is clear: steer clear of every kind of evil and test *all* things [emphasis mine] to enjoy abundant living and eliminate harmful influences. Just as we must be extremely vigilant with iPhones and Netflix offering pornography a click away, so too must we be on guard here.

Our directive is to discern evil in today's "Parental Advisory" music by examining lyrics and the lives of the artists as well as the graphics. Anything and anyone condoning illicit sex, violence, rejection of authority, sensuality, drugs, profanity, immodesty, LGBTQ propaganda and the occult must be avoided.

I remember when I was first converted, I loved a catchy song by Beatle George Harrison entitled "My Sweet Lord," thinking he was singing about Jesus. Chanting the chorus for months, I was in for a rude awakening when I discovered I was invoking and celebrating "Lord Krishna"!

Music's Mesmerizing Power

I try to be a "watchman on the wall" living in the Nashville "Music City" area, home to a steady buffet of concerts, shows, and of course the annual Bonnaroo extravaganza. I come from Cleveland, the city where the term "rock 'n' roll" was coined in 1955 and home of the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame. I played

drums for a decade in a rock band, "The Lost Souls," who recently released a CD of our greatest hits.

In my autobiography, *Clap Your Hands!*, I recalled one performance prior to my conversion:

In supreme ecstasy, I sat on my percussion throne and knew that every eye in Cleveland Stadium was focused on me. For the next 25 minutes, I was in bliss. As the electric guitars vibrated the powerful amplifiers, I helped to build each crescendo with rolling explosions of drum bursts and crashing symbols. Caught in the spell of raw, base emotion unleashed and translated to the semblance of a melodic line, the youthful audience began to sway with the rhythm and lose themselves increasingly in each song. Some were completely gone, possessed, dancing on their seats or in the aisles, jerking insanely to the frenzy of the electrically charged sounds. And I was the dance master, the drumstick my baton.

Early on, I learned the mesmerizing power of music. God created music, but it is the devil who counterfeits it and often uses it to seduce people onto sinful paths.

Remember when Moses descended with the 10 Commandments, enraged as he heard singing and saw idolatry with people dancing "in a frenzy," or, as the King James Version records, "the people were naked" (Ex. 32:25b)?

Or how about when "all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the peoples, the nations, and the languages fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up." (Dan.3:7, MEV).

This August. there's going to be a music festival at Woodstock, New York, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the historic event. Amidst the romantic recollection of the nostalgic music fest, it's critical to remember the reality of

the massive gathering of 400,000 young people who celebrated musical artistry along with unrestrained nudity, promiscuity and free-flowing drugs. Scores of the participants and performers met tragic, premature deaths.

The Bible makes it clear that Christians are not to conform to the culture and its seduction. "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think" (a, TLB).

The ways of God are becoming so clear and so easy, yet only the obedient can follow. When it comes to music, much of it is totally incompatible with standards from Scripture.

Musicians as Models

Besides the music, there is also the all-important area of performers' lifestyles influencing millions of vulnerable youth.

This month's *Rolling Stone* features a 7-page spread on platinum-selling artist, Tekashi69, a rapper who wears a \$300,000 necklace celebrating his 15 hits. His songs have been streamed 2.6 billion times and he has 15 million Instagram followers. He's called "the face of a generation." Like bisexual Lady Gaga, he professes to be a "Christian."

Lots of Christian parents say, "Hey, I'm not into hip-hop and rap, but I followed Elvis, Metallica and the Stones, so I'm open to my kids listening to their kind of music. I don't want to be legalistic, you know."

Tekashi69's breakout hit "69" was a pornographic video, and he's done a sex tape with a 13-year-old girl for which he was arrested. He was arrested three times last year for "assaulting a policeman" and "choking a 16-year-old." He's also been indicted for felonies including drug dealing, armed robbery and two attempted murders.

Tekashi69 is actually “Super villain” Daniel Hernandez, a gangsta rapper decorated with his “.” tattoo. He got his girlfriend pregnant and was expelled from school. Pray for this influential man, as he was recently sentenced to 32 years in prison (*Rolling Stone* magazine, Feb. 2019).

Safeguards in a Serious Time

As a parent and grandparent, I offer some suggestions in these perilous times. May we be proactive in monitoring the music, the message and the musicians.

- Discern from a biblically informed perspective if the content of the music, lifestyle of the artist and the fruit of the music glorifies God.
- Discover if lyrics encourage behavior contrary to Scripture.
- Determine if the music’s content subtly evokes sensual images inappropriate for our children.
- Decide if the music and musician may be a potential stumbling block to our children’s spiritual growth in an impressionable time of their lives.
- Draw upon God’s grace and wisdom in concert with pastors and other godly parents to keep communication strong; provide creative alternatives; plus, establish the importance of upholding God’s Word: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with a promise, ‘so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth’” (Eph. 6:1-3).

Here’s the deal: As God is preparing America for spiritual awakening, make a quality decision to embrace creative and inspirational music for joyful celebration and wholesome entertainment. Satan has his counterfeits, but God is the author of the authentic that lifts our spirits and honors Him.